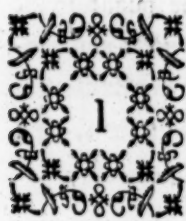


No. XVII.]

AN EARNEST
ADDRESS
TO THE
Profaners of God's Sabbaths.

Dear READER,

T was a Charge brought against God's professing People of old, *Thou hast despised mine holy Things, and hast profaned my Sabbaths*; and I am extremely sorry to find, that the same Charge stands in full Force against thee. Persons may be said to profane the Sabbaths of the Lord, when they do those Things on this sacred Day which he has expressly prohibited, when they neglect those Things which he has commanded, or when they perform commanded Duties in an unsuitable and unworthy Manner.

I am extremely concerned to find that Thou, my dear Reader, art a Profaner of God's Sabbaths in the first of these Senses; and as such, a Regard to the Honour of God, and a tender Compassion for the eternal Interests of ~~the~~ Soul, constrain me to address myself to thee in the follow-

following Manner : While you can allow yourself in the shameful and impious Practice of violating the Sabbaths of the Lord, and despising his holy Things ; while you can spend this sacred Day either in Idleness at home, or in vain and impertinent Visits, or in Walks of Pleasure abroad, I cannot indeed address thee as a Christian ; nevertheless give me Leave to expostulate with thee as a reasonable Creature, and let me beg of thee to put the following Queries close to thy own Heart : Dost thou not know that there is a God, who has made thee and every other Creature round about thee, and that he constantly upholds every Creature that he has made, by his perpetual Agency and unremitting Energy in and upon them ? Dost thou not know that thou art a Creature of his Power, and that he is the great Fountain and Original of all those Mercies which thou art entrusted with ? And dost thou not think it highly reasonable, that that God, in whom thou livest, movest, and hast thy Being, should be owned and acknowledged, worshipped and adored by thee ? Does not Reason itself tell thee, that some Time ought to be set apart for the immediate Worship of that great and glorious *Jehovah* to whom thou art indebted for thy Existence, and all thy Comforts and Supports ? And wilt thou spend all thy Time in the Gratification of thy own carnal Appetites, and leave no Time for God ?

But, besides the Reasonableness of the Duty in general, that thou mightest be at no Manner of Loss what Portion of Time ought to be set apart immediately for the Worship and Service of God, has he not appointed that one whole Day in seven should be set apart as an holy Sabbath unto himself ? Was not this the Seventh under the Old Testament Dispensation, and is it not the First under the Christian ? And has not God expressly commanded thee (*Exod. xx. 8.*) *to remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy ?* Has God, in Compassion to thy thoughtless, inconsiderate and forgetful Disposition of Mind, with respect to divine
and

and spiritual Things, and especially with respect to the Sanctification of the Sabbath, called upon thee to remember it, and to keep it holy unto himself, and wilt thou forget and neglect it? Art not thou a Subject of his moral Government? Art thou not a rational and intelligent, and therefore an accountable Creature? And wilt not thou submit thyself to the Authority of God? Wilt thou not obey his Laws, hearken to his Voice, and attend to his Injunctions? Or wilt thou, a mere groveling Worm of the Earth, lift up a rebellious Heel against thy Maker and Lord? Wilt thou bid Defiance to the Laws of the almighty and eternal God? Wilt thou proclaim War even with Omnipotence itself? Wilt thou rush thyself against the thick Bosses of his Buckler? Dost thou imagine that the great God is such a Governor, as will pay no Regard to the Honour of his Laws? Canst thou entertain the delusive Hope, that he will suffer them to be trampled upon by rebellious Worms with Impunity? O foolish and stupid Soul! Did any ever set himself against God, and prosper? Was there ever a Creature (a proud, insolent and rebellious Creature) that proved a Match for Omnipotence? Find him out, Reader, if thou canst. When Satan, the Prince of the apostate angelic Bands, raised a Rebellion even in Heaven itself against the eternal *Jehovah*, and set himself there to act in direct Opposition to the Laws of his Government, did he succeed in his bold and impious Attempt? Was he not hurled from the Regions of Bliss and Happiness down to the Pit of everlasting Horror and Despair? And is he not reserved in Chains of Darkness unto the Judgment of the great Day? Canst thou imagine then (who art a Creature in the Scale of Beings far inferior to him) that thou shalt succeed in thy Rebellion against God? If so glorious and powerful a Creature, as the Devil once was, proved infinitely too weak to be a Match for Omnipotence, canst thou entertain so much as one flattering Hope that thy feeble Attempts

against him shall prosper, or that thou shalt escape with Impunity? Poor, deluded Creature! give me Leave to tell thee, that as sure as there is a God who judgeth in the Earth, so sure it is, if thou art an Imitator of the Devil in his Rebellion, thou shalt also be a Companion with him in suffering, in suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire.

But I would not only plead the Authority of God, but also the Example of all good Men in every Age of the World, as an Argument to prevail upon thee to pay a religious Regard to the Sabbaths of the Lord. — And have not the Saints in every Age made it their Concern to submit themselves to the Authority of God? Have they not made Conscience of remembering the Sabbath-day to keep it holy? Did not the Saints, under the Old Testament Dispensation, make Conscience of observing the seventh Day of the Week as an holy Sabbath unto the Lord? And did not the Apostles and primitive Christians religiously observe the first Day of the Week, which they emphatically called the Lord's Day, it being the Day on which he arose from the Dead with all the Marks of a glorious and triumphant Conqueror? And wilt thou, my dear Reader, distinguish thyself from all that were truly pious and holy from the Beginning of the World down to the apostolic Age, yea, and from thence down to the present Day? Wilt thou forsake the assembling of thyself together with the Saints and People of God, as the Manner of great Numbers of impious and ungodly Wretches is? Art thou determined to forsake the Assemblies of all thy Fellow-Creatures, that discover any genuine Marks of real Piety and Devotion towards God, and Faith in the great Redeemer? And wilt thou join thyself with the Society of the Wicked, and enter even on the Lord's Day into the Synagogues of Satan? If this is thy determinate Resolution, then let me tell thee that thy Damnation slumbereth not; and that, as you make the Society of the Wicked

your

(5)

your Choice, Delight and Pleasure now, you shall (unless timely Repentance towards God, and Faith in the great Redeemer, prevent) have your Portion for ever with them in a future State of everlasting Horror and Misery. If you will rather join yourself with the Enemies of God and Christ, than imitate the Saints and People of God, in paying a religious Regard to the Sabbath-day; then you may rest assured, that the great Judge of all will another Day say to the ready Executioners of his righteous Vengeance, *As for that mine Enemy, which would not that I should reign over him, bring him hither and slay him before me.* He will order you to be brought forth as a public Victim, and he will have the Sentence of everlasting Condemnation executed in all its dreadful Terrors upon you. And canst thou bear the Thoughts of dwelling in everlasting Burnings? Or dost thou imagine that thy Hands will be strong in the Day of his final Wrath? I will leave the Answer to this important Question to God and thy own Conscience.

But again, give me Leave to expostulate with thee upon the Principles of Love and Gratitude. And here give me Leave to ask thee, whether, if you was to meet with a Person in very low and impoverished Circumstances, that had neither a Morfel of Bread to nourish him, nor a Penny of Money to relieve himself, nor even a Rag of Cloaths to cover him; and was you to shew Compassion to this poor, distressed Wretch; should you both feed and cloath him, and put him into a Way of getting a comfortable Livelihood; should you continually heap fresh Tokens of your Kindness upon him; should you deliver him out of repeated Streights and Difficulties; and should you even redeem him, when, by his own Folly, he had plunged himself into a voluntary Slavery and Vassalage to one of the worst of Tyrants: If, I say, you should do all these Things for such a miserable Object; and, after all, he should never acknowledge your Favours, never disco-

ver

ver a grateful Sense of the Benefits you have conferred upon him ; let me ask thee, whether the Blood in every Vein of thy Body would not even boil with Indignation against such an ungrateful Monster ? Wouldst not thou, from this Moment, look upon him as absolutely unworthy of your future favourable Notice ? Would you not regard him as an abandoned Wretch, that deserved to suffer the deepest Miseries and the most pungent Torments ? But may I not now be allowed to call upon thee to consider, that all this, and infinitely more, the great God has done for miserable and distressed Man ? May I not be allowed to call upon thee to consider, that that God who commands thee to remember the Sabbath-day, and to keep it holy, is the Creator, Preserver and Redeemer of poor, undone Man ; and that the Sabbath is set apart for this very End and Purpose, that we should own and acknowledge the glorious Perfections of the Deity, as displayed in the Creation, Preservation and Redemption of Men ? But whilst, dear Reader, thou art joining thyself with the Profaners of God's Sabbaths, who spread themselves over the Fields like an Army of destructive Locusts, whenever the Weather suits them, and who absent themselves from the Congregation of the Righteous ; let me call upon thee to ask thy own Conscience, whether thou art not acting in such a Manner, as to give a full Demonstration to all around thee, that thou art lost to all Sense of Gratitude for the many Benefits and Favours which the Divine Being has indulged thee with, both in a Way of Providence, and in a Way of Gospel Grace ? What, Reader ! hast thou no Concern to worship and adore that God, who has made thee, and who constantly loads thee with his Benefits ? Hast thou no Desire to hear the Sound of the Gospel, and the glad Tidings of Pardon, Peace and Salvation, through the Blood of a Redeemer's Cross, that you thus absent yourself from the House and Worship of God, and join yourself with those who are Blasphemers of God,

(7)

God, and Despisers of his Son, his Gospel and his Grace ? Dost thou not know that Faith comes by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word preached ? And do you neglect the House, the Worship and the Ordinances of God, because you will put yourself, as much as in you lies, out of the Reach of divine Mercy ? Dost thou indulge thyself in this Neglect, because thou wilt hear nothing that has a Tendency to awaken thy Conscience, and to convince thee of the corrupt, guilty and condemned State and Condition thou art in by Nature ; and because thou wilt hear nothing of that Method of saving and recovering Grace, which is held forth and proposed to perishing Sinners in a Gospel Dispensation ? Dost thou thus neglect the religious Observation of the Sabbath, because thou art determined to live and die in a State of Ignorance, Infidelity and Unbelief ? What, my dear Reader ! is the Favour of God, an Interest in the great Redeemer, a Participation of his Righteousness and Grace, a Covenant Right and Claim to immortal Blessedness, and at last an abundant Entrance into it, either such despicable or such dreadful Things, that you cannot bear so much as to hear of them ? And is an everlasting Separation from God, the supreme and chief Good, the perpetual Gnawings of your guilty Conscience, the Upbraidings of Devils and other damned Spirits, the Fire which shall never—never—never be extinguished, such important, such desirable Things, that you must needs make Choice of them ? In short, is eternal Happiness so mean, and everlasting Damnation so valuable a Thing, that you must needs despise the former, and make Choice of the latter ? Let Conscience speak, and that will furnish thee with a suitable Answer. But, as I would fain hope that thou art in some Measure convinced of thy horrid Impiety and Rebellion in profaning God's Sabbaths, I would conclude this Address unto thee by recommending to thy highest Regards the adorable Jesus, as the only Foundation of thy eternal Hope. The
Law

Law of God curses thee, (*Gal. iii. 10.*) because thou hast broke it in numberless Instances, not only in profaning God's Sabbaths, but also in a Variety of other Respects. Thou art condemned then upon the Foundation of this first Covenant; and there is no Hope of Happiness for thee, but by an Interest in the Grace of that second Covenant, which is sealed and ratified in the atoning Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. His Righteousness alone can justify thee, his Blood alone can wash thee from the Stains of thy Guilt, his Grace alone can renew and sanctify thy Nature, and his Strength alone can fortify thee against all future Temptations. Look then to Jesus for the Pardon of thy past Sins, and for Grace and Strength to enable thee to prize and value God's holy Things, and to pay a strict religious Regard to his Sabbaths in every future Part of Life; that so, when thou art removed from Sabbaths and Seasons of Grace on Earth, thou mayst be put into the Enjoyment of a Sabbath of eternal Rest with Christ in Heaven. This, dear Reader, is the affectionate Prayer of one that wishes thee the best of Blessings both here and hereafter.

F I N I S.

